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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 003315

SIPDIS

FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE  
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCENSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,  
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45  
(MAJ NICHOLLS)

USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR OIIP OPRC KPAO PREL ETRD PTER ASEC BG OCII

SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Aftermath of the London Blast;  
Dhaka

Summary: Newspapers continue to editorially criticize the backlash on the Muslim community in Britain following the blast. "Janakantha" wonders whether racists are taking advantage of the situation. A columnist in "Naya Diganta" opines that both sides of the "Fourth World War" are committing genocide in the name of fighting terrorism. "Bangladesh Observer" says the backlash proves that the British society is not as secular as its defendants claim. "Naya Diganta" says the bomb blast has not only drawn indignation from all people, but also united them against terrorism.

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Aftermath of the London Blast  
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"On Removing Fear in Britain"  
Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Janakantha"  
editorially comments (7/13):

It seems that terrorism has now engulfed the entire world. 9/11 was not the first and the last...Following the London blast, racists have created a new fear. They have attacked three mosques in London, Liverpool and Leeds, causing panic in the Muslim community. Al Qaeda has acknowledged its responsibility for the blast, although none has yet been identified with concrete evidence... Whatever the reason, these are despicable incidents. They are enemies of mankind, not only of the Muslim community, whose places of worship were attacked. The British High Commissioner's remarks that Bangladeshis in London have nothing to fear will reassure many of us. Terrorists have carried out the London blast. Peoples and governments of countries, including Bangladesh, are opposed to terrorism. It is the responsibility of the British government to ensure that nobody can create panic in the community on this issue. Fear in the British society must be removed. We are united with rest of the world against terrorism.

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"Both Sides Commit Genocide in the "Fourth World War"  
An op-ed page article in Bangla "Naya Diganta" by columnist  
Sadeq Khan opines (7/13):

Extremist Muslims are held responsible for any terrorist incident in western nations. It is certain that the IRA would have been blamed if such incident occurred a decade ago. Experts say that it is the practice of western intelligence to proceed with a target in mind. However, an organization named Al Qaeda in Europe has claimed responsibility. It is a matter of investigation whether Al Qaeda has any relations with this organization. Whatever facts come out of the investigation, if the 'war against terrorism' goes on for thousand of years, even then it will not be able to heal the wound the 7/7 has created in British history.

Borrowing words from British MP George Gallaway, it can be said that such retaliation will continue if the West follows a foreign and defense policy based on war and occupation. History will determine that both sides of the ongoing "Fourth World War" deserve condemnation. Both are war criminals.

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"How Secular Is Britain?"  
Independent English language newspaper "Bangladesh Observer"  
editorially comments (7/13):  
The backlash that has followed the London bombings of July 7 was expected. It only proves that British society is not as secular as is claimed by its defendants. Nevertheless one must add for the sake of putting it in perspective that things would have been much worse had the incidents occurred

in any other continent....

The explosions are being compared to the IRA bombings in London in the 1980s, but the comparison ends there. There was no wholesale attack on the Irish community living in London or the UK during that period nor did British government annul the agreement that allows Irish citizens to visit the UK without a visa. But why is it any different when it comes to Muslims? Probably because it is easier to identify them by the color of their skins which is different from that of the natives. Race has always been a factor in British politics.

Prime Minister Tony Blair of the UK has admitted that one has to go into the roots of terrorism although he strongly denies that it was a result of the Anglo-US invasion of Iraq last year. One just has to remind him that it is not Germany or France that has come under attack. It is always countries like Britain or Spain that have sent troops to Iraq that has been attacked. After Spain withdrew its soldiers from Iraq there has been no attack on the country. The UK, too, should think of withdrawing its troops from Iraq and cut down the possibility of being a prospective target for international terrorists. British policy should not be dictated by the fact that their troops in Iraq are in a comparatively safe zone. They should also understand that they are a party to an occupation that has caused death and destruction to millions in Iraq.

So far many in the West had felt that they did not mind as long as the war was in a far-away land but the London bombings should make it clear to them that the battle-lines are undefined. It should be a reason for introspection and the people in Britain should realize that it is not a good policy to remain smug as long as the suffering is foreign.

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"The London Blast: These Barbaric and Inhuman Attacks Cannot be accepted by any Consideration"

Pro-Islamic Bangla "Naya Diganta" editorially comments (7/9):

We have no words to condemn the London blast on Thursday. The attacks were carried out on the underground trains and public buses. An extremist organization has claimed responsibility for the attack through a website. However, this confession is not acceptable without legal proof. The British government is also examining whether there is any truth in it. The identity of the perpetrators remains unresolved. But Pope Benedict has said the attack is against Christians. Such remarks should not be made before investigations.... Following the blast, London was put on high alert. The world leaders have condemned the terrorist attack. All parties, communities and religions in Britain have condemned the attack and pledged to work together to deal with terrorist attacks. G 8 leaders have pledged to work together in the war against terror. The Bangladesh government has immediately condemned the attack and expressed solidarity with Londoners. In a joint statement, Muslim leaders and the Bishop in London have urged all to remain calm and face the situation. This attack on innocent people has not only drawn indignation from all, but also united the people to resist this cruel and barbaric menace.

The attack is being considered as an attack on the entire mankind. Perpetrators do not deserve to be considered as humans. They are beasts engaged in revenge. British Muslim leaders have urged people not to place blame prematurely and not to involve peace loving Muslims and Islam with this barbaric incident. Blair also said that those who have carried out the attack are enemies of mankind. Rejecting the fear that Muslims will be subjected to atrocities, he said that Islam is a religion of peace. Muslims are peaceful and law abiding. Therefore, allegations should not be raised against any community or religion without concrete evidence or before investigations. We are against this barbaric attack and express our solidarity with the people of Britain. We urge all peace loving people to work together against this despicable attack.

Chammas